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*The nations shall learn war no more.*

## THE ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

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THE AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY

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### GREAT BRITAIN AND VENEZUELA.

The London *Herald of Peace* says in reference to the boundary dispute between Great Britain and Venezuela that "England is willing to submit to arbitration that portion concerning which there is some doubt, but declines to submit to any other party a reconsideration of her long acknowledged and ancient frontier line, concerning which there was no doubt until gold was discovered in the section of British territory now claimed by Venezuela." The *Herald* seems to state this position of Great Britain as if approving it. But according to Venezuela this "ancient frontier line" has never been acknowledged by anybody but Great Britain. She claims to have been protesting against British aggression for more than fifty years and that a large part of what Great Britain now claims as her "long acknowledged" right has been from time to time acquired by the most barefaced aggression. Portions of the records of the Venezuela state department correspondence which have been made public seem to indicate that Venezuela is right in this statement. If this is not a case for arbitration, we should not know where to find one. Both countries lay claim to a certain territory, and each pretends to support its claim by documentary and other evidence. There are only three ways out of such a dispute, to submit the case to disinterested parties, to go to war about it or for one party simply to back down and let the other have its way, right or wrong. The case seems to us to be exactly like that of the Behring Sea dispute. The United States claimed to have exclusive control of the whole of Behring Sea, and that this had been the case from the time that Alaska passed from the possession of Russia into her own. This claim the state department supported by voluminous documentary evidence. Great Britain, on the contrary, held that the Behring Sea was an open sea and that she had a

right in it. After two years of vigorous diplomatic correspondence the case was referred to an arbitral tribunal, and the contention of the United States, though supported by the ablest legal counsel in the country, was set aside. We are inclined to the opinion, after having read carefully and impartially what has been said on both sides, that the claim of Great Britain against Venezuela is quite as weak as that of the United States was in the case of the Behring Sea difficulty. But be this as it may, the dispute is unquestionably just of that kind which ought to be submitted to the impartial examination of a competent disinterested tribunal. Neither the British Foreign Office nor the Venezuelan State Department alone is capable of deciding it, much less the press of either of those countries or of any other country, the *ADVOCATE OF PEACE* and the *Herald of Peace* certainly included. The certainty of Great Britain that she is in the rightful possession of the disputed territory ought to make her ready to submit the case cheerfully to arbitration, and the fact that she has steadily declined to do this, though repeatedly asked and urged for many years to do so, not only by Venezuela but by our own government, is causing impartial people in all other countries to think that she really does not believe in her own pretensions. The *Herald of Peace* ought to join with the friends of peace and justice everywhere in trying to get the case as speedily as possible referred to an impartial tribunal. That is what will have to be done ultimately, and the sooner it is done the better.

### THE POWER OF A TREATY.

Those of our readers who do not have access to the government publications will be glad to read in full the Rush-Bagot treaty of April, 1817, about which there has been considerable talk in the papers recently. We give in full the two final letters of the diplomatic correspondence by which the treaty was made, containing its provisions:

*Mr. Bagot to Mr. Rush.*

WASHINGTON, April 28, 1817.

The undersigned, His Britannick Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, has the honor to acquaint Mr. Rush that having laid before His Majesty's Government the correspondence which passed last year between the Secretary of the Department of State and the undersigned upon the subject of a proposal to reduce the Naval Force of the respective countries upon the American Lakes, he has received the commands of His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, to acquaint the Government of the United States that His Royal Highness is willing to accede to the proposition made to the undersigned by the Secretary of the Department of State in his note of the second of August last.

His Royal Highness, acting in the name and on the behalf of His Majesty, agrees that the Naval Force to be maintained upon the American Lakes by His Majesty and the Government of the United States shall henceforth

be confined to the following vessels on each side, that is :

On Lake Ontario to one vessel not exceeding one hundred tons burthen and armed with one eighteen-pound cannon.

On the upper lakes to two vessels not exceeding like burthen each and armed with like force.

On the waters of Lake Champlain to one vessel not exceeding like burthen and armed with like force.

And His Royal Highness agrees that all other armed vessels on these lakes shall be forthwith dismantled, and that no other vessels of war shall be there built or armed.

His Royal Highness further agrees that if either party should hereafter be desirous of annulling this stipulation and should give notice to that effect to the other party, it shall cease to be binding after the expiration of six months from the date of such notice.

The undersigned has it in command from His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, to acquaint the American Government that His Royal Highness has issued orders to His Majesty's officers on the lakes directing that the Naval Force so to be limited shall be restricted to such service as will in no respect interfere with the proper duties of the armed vessels of the other party.

The undersigned has the honor to renew to Mr. Rush the assurances of his highest consideration.

CHARLES BAGOT.

*Mr. Rush to Mr. Bagot.*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

April 29, 1817.

The undersigned, acting Secretary of State, has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Bagot's note of the 28th of this month, informing him, that having laid before the Government of His Britannick Majesty the correspondence which passed last year between the Secretary of State and himself upon the subject of a proposal to reduce the naval force of the two countries upon the American Lakes, he had received the commands of His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, to inform this Government that His Royal Highness was willing to accede to the proposition made by the Secretary of State in his note of the second of August last.

The undersigned has the honor to express to Mr. Bagot the satisfaction which the President feels at His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent's having acceded to the proposition of this Government as contained in the note alluded to. And in further answer to Mr. Bagot's note, the undersigned, by direction of the President, has the honor to state that this Government, cherishing the same sentiments expressed in the note of the second of August, agrees that the naval force to be maintained upon the lakes of the United States and Great Britain shall henceforth be confined to the following vessels on each side, that is :

On Lake Ontario to one vessel not exceeding One Hundred Tons burden and armed with an eighteen-pound cannon. On the Upper Lakes to two vessels not exceeding the like burden each, and armed with like force, and on the waters of Lake Champlain to one vessel not exceeding like burden and armed with like force.

And it agrees that all other armed vessels on these lakes shall be forthwith dismantled, and that no other vessels of war shall be there built or armed. And it further agrees that if either party should hereafter be desirous of annulling this stipulation and should give notice

to that effect to the other party, it shall cease to be binding after the expiration of six months from the date of such notice.

The undersigned is also directed by the President to state that proper orders will be forthwith issued by this Government to restrict the naval force thus limited to such services as will in no respect interfere with the proper duties of the armed vessels of the other party.

The undersigned eagerly avails himself of this opportunity to tender to Mr. Bagot the assurances of his distinguished consideration and respect.

RICHARD RUSH.

This agreement as to the building and maintaining of war vessels on the Great Lakes has recently been brought into prominence by the question whether certain vessels for the United States navy could be built at the Detroit ship yards, provided they should not receive their armament while on the lakes. Secretary of the Navy Herbert, after careful consideration, has decided that they can not be so built. The decision is unquestionably right from the standpoint of the obligations imposed by the treaty, and eminently wise from any point of view. Our country's reputation for love of peace as well as for straightforwardness and honesty will be everywhere strengthened by it and this will be worth more to us in the way of protection than half a dozen warships.

Some fire-eaters have waxed hot over the subject and declared that the treaty ought to be "torn up and consigned to the waste-basket." They have increased their indignation by the statements made in the papers that Great Britain has not hesitated to violate the agreement by building on the lakes ships destined in case of need to be turned into war-vessels. We have no means at hand of determining the truth or falsity of this statement about Great Britain, but if it were true our country would not therefore be justified in taking the rash step of commencing to build such vessels on the lakes. We are under a doubly strong obligation to keep the treaty, for we sought it in the first place ourselves in our own interests.

The agreement was made just after the close of the war of 1812 and has doubtless saved us many millions of dollars in money which otherwise would have been spent in building and keeping up war vessels on these waters. What it has saved us in the way of international friction and possible war it is impossible to say. During the time of the Civil War when indignation against Great Britain was running high because of the conduct of her government in the interests of the South, notice was given by our State Department of a desire to terminate the convention. On soberer thought this notice was withdrawn, and very wisely too. One almost shudders to think what might have happened if all this chain of lakes had been opened to preparations for war.

We are heartily glad that Secretary Herbert has had the calmness and good judgment to interpret as strictly as he has our obligations under this treaty. Nothing but good results can come of the course which he has taken,

and we trust that thereby the question of any disturbance of this agreement, which has now been in force nearly 79 years, may have been forever settled.

#### COMMERCE DESTROYERS.

In a strong article on "Jingoes and Silverites" in the November *North American Review* Mr. Edward Atkinson, one of the clearest-headed and best-informed thinkers in this country, gives expression to sentiments touching our relations to England which there ought to be no occasion for uttering this late in the nineteenth century. But, unfortunately, there never have been more than two or three periods in our history when such sentiments needed utterance worse than they do now.

At first thought, it is a little puzzling to understand why jingoes and silverites should be classed together, for there are evidently many silverites who are not jingoes at all and *vice versa*. But on dipping into Mr. Atkinson's sentences one soon discovers that he is dealing only with that extreme class of free-coinage silver men, certain attorneys of the mine-owners and certain madly partisan anything-to-beat-England legislators, who would be willing, some of them glad, to carry their free-silver proclivities to the extent of involving our country in a disastrous war with Great Britain simply to improve, as they think, their business prosperity. Silverites of this type are certainly a great bane to the country, as ites of any other kind are who carry their views and wishes to such a madly selfish extreme. But Mr. Atkinson we know would grant as readily as any one that many silverites, bimetalists and free-coinage men both, are as far from wishing a rupture with Great Britain as any of us.

Turning to the jingo folks, the whole class falls, and we think with entire justice, under Mr. Atkinson's vigorous and well-aimed blows. There is no good whatever in jingoism. It is evil, and only evil and that continually, no matter by whom held. "The jingo element," he says, "can only become dangerous through the negligence of the mass of thinking men. That men are negligent is witnessed by the fact that those who would promote war with Great Britain do not immediately become disgraced as they might rightly be."

Speaking of the money which has lately been expended at the public cost in the construction of a new navy, Mr. Atkinson says that in the present state of the world, "we required armed cruisers which could be speedily sent to dangerous points for the protection of our citizens in foreign lands and for the protection of our commerce. We may have been justified in constructing one or two so-called battle-ships without waiting for their worthlessness to be disclosed; but we can not be justified in having constructed two very costly vessels of war which are known in the navy and generally among the people as 'commerce destroyers.' That name is a disgrace to the ship, to officers of the navy and to the nation. These

two ships of war cost about seven million dollars, or a little more. That sum is nearly as great as the endowment of our oldest university, Harvard. The time was when it was considered justifiable for an army to sack a city and for the officers and soldiers of an army to enrich themselves from the plunder of the private houses and other property of a conquered country. That time has long since passed. The sacking of cities is a disgrace. Private plunder is treated as robbery. An officer joining therein ceases to be a gentleman, and is regarded as a thief. Yet what would disgrace an army and its officers upon the land may be imposed upon the navy and its officers as a duty. It is now held to be among their lawful functions to do the work of pirates in ships of war built at the public cost, bearing the degrading name of 'commerce destroyers.' The nation was even represented at the recent opening of the peaceful canal at Kiel by one of these vilely named armed vessels. What could have been more grotesque than the display of war vessels at the opening of the ship-canal at Kiel \* \* sent thither from various states and nations, at a very heavy cost, to celebrate the opening of a canal whose purpose is to carry cotton, fibres and metals to the people of Germany. \* \* The cost of the canal was about forty million dollars. The waste upon these big and mainly worthless war-ships must have represented an expenditure of not less than two hundred million dollars."

Mr. Atkinson might well have gone a step further in his opposition to war vessels. In case of naval war between this and any other country, would it make the slightest difference whether these two ships were called "commerce destroyers" or not? In spite of all efforts to the contrary, it will be a long time yet before war becomes sufficiently "civilized" to respect the private property of national enemies at sea, or on land either, especially if the contest be a close one. It is true that the sacking of cities is now a disgrace, because the sacking of a city implies wanton violence after victory is won. But the destruction of private property is considered perfectly legitimate, and always will be when necessary to break the power of the enemy and secure victory. The most brilliant and lauded of all the campaigns of our Civil War, which on the part of the North is usually considered to have been carried on on "Christian" and "civilized" principles, was little else than a destruction of private property on a huge scale from beginning to end. Three hundred millions of Southern private property went to smoke, or to ruin in other ways, at the hands of Sherman's destructive hosts, and this was considered perfectly legitimate because necessary in order speedily to break the backbone of the Southern resistance. Our war-ships, no matter how named, would, in the case of a closely-contested war with any nation, treat the enemy's private commerce at sea just as Sherman's army treated the property of the people of the South. They would